POLS 220: World Politics

Spring 2024

Instructor:	Dr. Neil S. Williams (he/him)	**Time:**	Online Asynchronous
Email:	shaun.williams@louisiana.edu	**Place:**	Online Asynchronous

Course Pages:

1. http://www.neilswilliams.com/teaching.html

2. https://moodle.louisiana.edu/

3. https://www.perusall.com/

Student Hours: 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm Tuesday on Zoom
10:45 am -12:45pm Wednesday in Mouton Hall 118, or by appointment.

Required Texts:

- None

Objectives: Why do some countries hold elections while others do not? Why are some states able to provide security and welfare to their citizens while others struggle to do so? Why are some countries plagued by violence while others enjoy internal peace? These questions have long animated the field of comparative politics and are among the several of which we will explore this semester.

This course will provide students with a firm foundation in the sub-field of comparative politics, preparing them for further analysis of politics around the world and across contexts. The course has two main objectives:

1. To familiarize students with the importance of theory and research design for describing, explaining, and understanding political processes. After taking this course, students should be able to distinguish between different theoretical explanations and evaluate the merit of evidence used to support them.

2. To provide students with an overview of key topics and debates in comparative politics. Students should be able to understand the basis of these debates as well as take and support positions on them.

General Education Student Learning Objectives

1. SB1: Evaluate data, evidence and arguments using discipline specific theory and methods.

2. SB2: Identify theories in the discipline relevant to understanding human behavior and society.

3. SB3: Distinguish the forces shaping human behavior and society.

4. SB4: Describe relations among individuals, groups and society utilizing discipline specific terminology.

5. SB5: Recognize the significance of individual, cultural and societal diversity.

Perusall: All readings and lecture slides will be available on **Perusall**. Perusall is a cool e-reader that allows for collaborative annotation of readings and videos with both me and your peers. Assignment due dates and reminders are also included in Perusall to help you keep track of readings. It is free to create an account. After you have done so, our course can be accessed by entering the code **WILLIAMS-DVRQC**.

Important Dates: Below are important test and due dates. Note that they, as well as everything else in the syllabus, may be changed as the semester continues. I will notify you in good time of any updates.

> **Module 1 Perusall Annotations and Moodle Discussions due** . Monday, January 29th, 2024
> **Project Proposal due** .... Monday, February 26th, 2024
> **Module 2 Perusall Annotations and Moodle Discussions due** . Monday, February 26th, 2024
> **Midterm Due** .... Friday, March 8th, 2024
> **Module 3 Perusall Annotations and Moodle Discussions due** . Monday, March 18th, 2024
> **Module 4 Perusall Annotations and Moodle Discussions due** . Monday, April 29th, 2024
> **Final Project due** .... Tuesday, April 30th, 2024
> **Project Memo due** .... Wednesday, May 1st, 2024 by 11:59 P.M.

Grading

Late work will be taken 10% off per day and I reserve the right to give a 0 after more than 3 days with no valid excuse.

- **Participation: (25%)** Participation will be evaluated using Perusall annotations/comments and Moodle discussion posts. Active participation implies paying attention to class videos, completing assignments, and engaging with the material and with your fellow student colleagues. You will get the most out of class videos if you watch them after having read the Perusall assignments and are capable to discuss and respond to the assigned material. Keep in mind these points as you read:

  1. What is the main point or argument?
  2. What evidence do they use to support their argument?
  3. Is there contradicting evidence?
  4. How does the author's argument relate to the other content from the course?

  - *Each module's Perusall annotations will be worth 20% of your Participation grade, or 5% of your total grade. The final 20% of Participation will come from discussion posts on Moodle. The due dates for discussion board responses will be the same as the deadline for Module Perusall annotations.*

– You should have at least one in-depth annotation for full credit on that specific Perusall assignment (but are free to include more, including shorter ones, if desired). In-depth Perusall annotations should be around 3 sentences and engage with the assigned content on a deeper level. Your goal for these annotations is to create connections and to critically consider the material.

Examples of full credit hypothetical Perusall annotations:

1. **Connection to lecture/other material:** "Wow! This video was incredibly interesting. I am reminded of the lecture where we discussed how situations of economic stress can encourage unrest in other areas of society in Egypt. I wonder what the government and/or could have done in both the Egyptian case and the one here in England to meet protesters demands? It seems like the groups in England and Egypt wanted slightly different things."

2. **Response to an argument or main point:** "I appreciate how this article discussed democracy, and while I like what they are saying about the need to think about democracy in different ways, I am somewhat confused about how to apply this in the real world? Do different scholarly conceptualizations of democracy impact how different people around the world interact with their government? Does it matter what the people say about their government, or is it just the experts' considerations we should think about?"

Examples of hypothetical Perusall annotations that may not receive full credit:

1. **Too short:** "Very cool. I had no idea that voting was like this."
2. **Overly vague or wandering to fill space:** "This is an important topic that we should all make sure to listen to. When I think of important topics this is definitely near the top. Although I didn't know about this before, I really know more now."

- **Midterm: (25%)**

- **Final project: (50%)** For the final project you are tasked with teaching non-experts about a concept or idea we've learned this semester or something else related to this course. You can use one of the following formats:

  – Podcast
    * 8-10 minutes long
    * Include a closed captioning transcript of the text of your audio from the podcast as a separate document when you submit to Moodle

  – Video
    * 8-10 minutes long
    * Include a closed captioning transcript of the text of your audio from the podcast as a separate document, which you will also submit Moodle

  – Newspaper/magazine piece
    * 5 pages of content

  – Poster/photo collage piece
    * Along with the poster/photo piece, include a 2.5-page description of the piece, justifying the meaning of the art and how it helps explain your topic.

– Work of fiction

  ∗ Should be 5 pages

– **Anything else needs special approval**

Regardless of the medium you choose, all projects will be graded on the following criteria:

– **Project proposal: (10%)**: 1-2 page proposal of your project idea with description of your main points and planned approach

– **Project: (60%)**: Project graded on the below criteria

  ∗ (30%):Demonstrates a clear understanding of the concept. While accessibility is important, represent the concept or topic accurately and faithfully.
  ∗ (30%) Makes clear why the concept is important for some aspects of politics (In a particular case or generally)
  ∗ (10%) Uses language that is accessible to a broad public
  ∗ (15%) Demonstrates effort commensurate with a final class project
  ∗ (15%) Showcases creativity and imaginative thinking

– **Project reflection memo: (30%)** 3-4 page memo attached explaining your project, its method, and how it relates to your project topic.

Grade Scale

A	>= 90.00
B	80.00 - 89.99
C	70.00 - 79.99
D	60.00 - 69.99
F	<= 59.99

Academic Honesty *"The University holds that all work for which a student will receive a grade or credit shall be an original contribution or shall be properly documented to indicate sources. Abrogation of this principle entails dishonesty, defeats the purpose of instruction, and undermines the high goals of the University. Cheating in any form will not be tolerated. Students shall be assumed to know the acceptable methods and techniques for proper documentation of sources and to avoid cheating and plagiarism in all work submitted for credit, whether prepared in or out of class."*(**From University of Louisiana Lafayette page on Academic Honesty**.) Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and if discovered will be appropriately punished, including with the reserved right to give a 0 for the assignment(s). For more information about what constitutes cheating, plagiarism, or intellectual dishonesty, consult me or the university web page.

Statement on AI software such as ChatGPT

Continuing with the previous statement on academic dishonesty, the use of ChatGPT and other AI software is prohibited for graded assignments. Using AI software is grounds

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Final project adapted from project assignment conceived and developed by Hakeem Jefferson, Stanford University. Contact me in good time for deadlines on make-up work.

for a 0 on the assignment and possible referral to the University. Furthermore, for assignments, we will be using Turnitin software which has tools to detect AI-generated text and responses, making the use of AI for assignments especially inadvisable.

Disability Resources: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first be registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. Students may call 337-482-5252 or visit the ODS office in Agnes Edwards Hall, room 126. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with their instructor to make appropriate arrangements for accommodations.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources:

- If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to visit the Counseling and Testing Center page with tips on the **Mental Health & Wellness Resources** page. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

- Make sure to seek help when needed. FREE counseling is available to you at the University Counseling and Testing Center. For more information, please contact the office at 337-482-6480, counseling@louisiana.edu, or stop by the Saucier Wellness Center (OK Allen Hall).

Technology: I permit laptops and other devices such as Kindles and iPads if they are being used for class-related purposes. If you are off-task (Facebook, Instagram, Myspace, Tik Tok, Neopets, Club Penguin, etc.) while on these devices, it will be deducted from your participation grade.

Coronavirus Information for Students

Fall 2022 Overview

Vaccinations Required
UL Lafayette students are required to provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination, a physician's certification that the vaccine is medically contraindicated, or a written dissent. Learn more about the vaccination requirement.

Boosters are strongly encouraged.

Face masks recommended on campus
The University's Face Covering Policy was recently amended to recommend, but not require, that everyone wear face coverings in all indoor settings and outdoors while on University property.

A department or unit may require all individuals wear face coverings over their mouths and noses if it is determined to be necessary during a specific face-to-face course, in a specific classroom, laboratory, and/or private office/workspace, or other areas.

Additional exemptions and face covering guidelines are outlined in the policy. Read the Face Covering Policy on the University Policies website.

Courses to return to original delivery methods, employees to return to normal work schedules

The transmission rate of COVID-19 remains high in the Acadiana region and throughout the state, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Louisiana Department of Health. However, the University is seeing a decline in positivity rates among its students and employees.

This decrease, combined with the University's comprehensive testing protocols, is enabling a return to normal course delivery methods and operations. Classes that transitioned to remote learning at the start of the spring semester will begin to transition back to their original course delivery methods beginning Monday, Feb. 7. All courses should have returned to their original modes of instruction by Monday, Feb. 21. Students should check Moodle and with their professors for more details regarding when their classes will transition back.

In-person student organization events, including meetings, socials, and service projects, will continue to be allowed on and off campus provided masks are worn and proper social distancing can be maintained. Additionally, intramural sports will resume.

COVID-19 testing available on campus
COVID testing is available by appointment at Student Health Services on campus.

See a list of other local COVID-19 testing sites from the Louisiana Department of Health.

University's COVID-19 testing strategy As of April 7, testing of asymptomatic University employees and students (regardless of vaccination status) is suspended.

Stay home if you do not feel well.

Students
Students who feel ill should stay home and call Student Health Services at (337) 482-1293 to schedule an appointment. Students are required to report illness or a known COVID-19 exposure via the UL Lafayette Student Quarantine and Isolation form.

View pdfs of the CDC's latest quarantine and isolation guidelines and what to do if you have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19.

Staff and Faculty Members

As a reminder, staff and faculty members who test positive for COVID-19 must contact their supervisors and complete the COVID-19 positive test reporting form. Additionally, faculty and staff who have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 must complete the COVID-19 exposure reporting form.

Reporting forms must be completed by faculty and staff who work on campus or remotely, and by those who are on leave awaiting test results.

Tentative Course Outline:

Contents

The schedule provides an **outline** of what to complete each week. It is okay not to complete by each week but make sure you are working at a pace that is manageable and where you will not get too far behind. I would highly recommend completing the Perusall annotations before watching the lectures on Moodle. Perusall annotations and discussion posts for a module are due the next class day after the last day of content for the module. **Note that to go on to the next module on Moodle, you will need to pass the module review quiz with all questions correct.**

<mark>Yellow</mark> indicates important information

Module 1: Foundations of Social Science Comparison & the State

1.1   Week 1—Introductions—(January 10-January 12)

- *Perusall by end of the week:*

    - Create a Perusall account and sign in to our course

    - ***Optional***. Paul, Richard and Linda Elder. "Critical Thinking: Concepts and Tools".

    - ***Optional***. "How to read in college".

- *Watch on Moodle this week:*

    1. Lecture: *Introduction*

- *Discussion on Moodle by end of the week:*

    1. Introductions

1.2   Week 2—Foundations and Definitions—(January 15-January 19)

- *Perusall by end of the week:*

    - "Can you name a country?". 2017. *Jimmy Kimmel Live.*

    - Akan Malici and Elizabeth Smith - Political Science Research in Practice (2012, Routledge). Chapter 1.

    - Landman 2002 - Issues and methods in comparative politics - an introduction. Chapter 2. "How to Compare Countries"

    - ***Optional***. What Do We Know About British Attitudes Toward Immigration? A Pedagogical Exercise of Sample Inference and Regression — Steven V. Miller Optional

- *Watch on Moodle by end of the week:*

    2. Lecture: *Foundations and Definitions*

Note that the schedule is tentative and can be changed.

3. Lecture: *The Science of Politics*

- *Discussion on Moodle this week:*

  2. Movie, TV, Song Choice

1.3   Week 3—The State—(January 22-January 26)

- *Perusall by end of the week:*

  - William Roberts Clark and Matt Golder - Principles of Comparative Politics (2017, CQ Press) pg. 141-144.

  - Blaydes, Lisa. 2017. "State Building in the Middle East." *Annual Review of Political Science* 20(1): 487–504.

- *Watch on Moodle by end of the week:*

  4. Lecture: *What is the State*

  5. Lecture: *Developing and Distinguishing the State*

- *Discussion on Moodle by end of the week:*

  3. Key features of the United States

Module 2: Democracy, Authoritarianism, and Democratization

2.1   Week 4—Democracy—(January 29-February 2)

- *Perusall by end of the week*

  - Dahl, Robert Alan. 1973. Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition. Yale University Press. pg. 1-16.

  - "The U.S. Isn't A Democracy". 2022. *Al Jazeera.*

  - Boese, Vanessa A. 2019. "How (not) to measure democracy." International Area Studies Review 22(2): 95–127.

  - "How democratic is your country?". 2019. *The Economist.*

- *Watch on Moodle by end of the week*

  6. Lecture: *Understanding Democracy*

  7. Lecture: *Measuring Democracy*

- *Discussion on Moodle by end of the week:*

  4. First political experiences

  5. Features of democracy

- *Due:*

  – **Module 1 Perusall annotations due Monday January 29 by 11:59 P.M.**

  – **Module 1 Moodle discussion posts due Monday January 29 by 11:59 P.M.**

2.2   Week 5—Regimes & Authoritarianism—(February 5-February 9)

- *Perusall by end of the week*

  – William Roberts Clark and Matt Golder - Principles of Comparative Politics (2017, CQ Press). pg. 462-485.

  – Update: Saudi Arabia. *Patriot Act with Hasan Minhaj.*

  – **First 20-30 minutes:** "The Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia (full documentary)". 2019. *Frontline.*

  – ***Optional***. Iran: Life Under Sanctions in 2020 - Documentary Optional.

- *Watch on Moodle by end of the week*

  8. Lecture: *Institutions & Regimes*

  9. Lecture: *Types of Authoritarianism*

- *Discussion on Moodle by end of the week:*

  6. V-Dem Investigation

2.3   Week 6—NO CLASS-MARDI GRAS—(February 12-February 16)

2.4   Week 7—Democratization—(February 19-February 23)

- *Perusall by end of the week*

  – Geddes, Barbara. 1999. "What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 2(1): 115–144.

  – The Evolution of World Democracy - An Infographic Time-Lapse. 2017. *TDC.*

  – Apartheid Explained: Nelson Mandela's Battle. 2021. *NewAfrica.*

  – South Africa's Transition from Apartheid to Democracy. 2014. *SABC.*

- *Watch on Moodle by end of the week*

  10. Lecture: *Democratization*

  11. Lecture: *Democratization in South Africa*

- *Available:*

  – **Midterm becomes available on Moodle Friday, February 23 11:59 pm**

Module 3: Elections & Public Opinion

3.1   Week 8—Elections and Electoral Systems—(February 26-March 1)

- *Perusall by the end of the week:*

  – Bormann, Nils-Christian, and Matt Golder. 2013. "Democratic Electoral Systems around the world, 1946–2011." *Electoral Studies* 32(2): 360–369.

  – "Which voting system is the best? - Alex Gendler". 2020. *TED-Ed.*

  – "How do UK elections work? CNBC Explains". 2019. *CNBC International.*

- *Watch on Moodle by end of the week:*

  12. Lecture: *Why Elections?*

  13. Lecture: *Electoral Systems*

- *Due:*

  – **Project Proposal due Monday February 26 by 11:59 P.M.**

  – **Module 2 Perusall annotations due Monday, February 26 by 11:59 P.M.**

  – **Module 2 Moodle discussions due Monday, February 26 by 11:59 P.M.**

3.2   Week 9—Voting—(March 4-March 8)

- *Perusall by end of the week*

  – "One Vote". 2016. *Radiolab.*

  – "How India runs the world's biggest election". 2019. *Vox.*

  – "Whose Vote Counts, Explained: Narrated by Leonardo DiCaprio". 2020. *Netflix.*

- *Watch on Moodle by end of the week*

  14. Lecture: *Voting*

- *Discussion on Moodle by end of the week:*

  7. Young people and electoral participation

- *Due:*

  – **Midterm due Friday March 8 by 11:59 P.M.**

3.3   Week 10—Public Opinion—(March 11-March 15)

- *Perusall by end of the week:*

    - Norris, Pippa. 2009. "The globalization of comparative public opinion research." Handbook of Comparative Politics: 522–540.

    - "How Do Election Polls Work?". 2012. *Take Part.*

    - Assessing the Representativeness of Public Opinion Surveys — Pew Research Center

    - "Marriage equality: why an opinion poll may be more accurate than a voluntary postal vote". 2017. *The Guardian.*

    - Khan, Omar. "The polls are ignoring a crucial factor in this election: minority voters". 2019. *The Guardian.*

- *Watch on Moodle by end of the week:*

    15. Lecture: *Public Opinion*

    16. Lecture: *Studying Public Opinion*

Module 4: Challenges to Democracy and the State

4.1   Week 11—Sexuality, Gender, and Representation—(March 18-March 22)

- *Perusall by end of the week:*

    - Pico, Manuela L & Josi Tikuna. 2019. "Indigenous Sexualities: Resisting Conquest and Translation." In *Sexuality and Translation in World Politics*. Edited by Caroline Cottet and Manuela Lavinas Picq. Chapter 9.

    - "Fighting for LGBT rights in Uganda". 2020. *BBC World Service.*

    - "Cracking the nut: female political participation in Lebanon". 2016. *feMENA*

- *Watch on Moodle by end of the week:*

    17. Lecture: *Sexuality, Gender, and Representation*

- *Discussion on Moodle by end of the week:*

    8. Representation

- *Due:*

    - **Module 3 Perusall annotations due Monday March 18 by 11:59 P.M.**

4.2   Week 12—NO CLASS-SPRING BREAK—(March 25-April 1)

4.3   Week 13—Populism and the Far-Right, and Democratic Backsliding—(April 1-April 5)

- *Perusall by end of the week:*

  – Lüdert, Jan. 2018. "An Alternative for Germany? Tracing Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations' Thesis in a Right-Wing Populist Party". In *The 'Clash of Civilizations' 25 Years On: A Multidisciplinary Appraisal.* Edited by David Orsi.

  – "Germany's Far Right is Surging: Decade of Hate". 2021. *VICE.*

- *Watch on Moodle by end of the week:*

  18. Lecture: *Populism and the Far Right*

- *Discussion on Moodle by end of the week:*

  9. Populism Investigation

4.4   Week 13—Democratic Backsliding—(April 8-April 12)

- *Perusall by end of the week:*

  – "How bad is the crisis in democracy?". 2019. *The Economist.*

  – Mechkova, Valeriya, Anna Lührmann, and Staffan Lindberg. 2017. "How Much Democratic Backsliding?" *Journal of Democracy* 28(4): 162–169.

- *Watch on Moodle by end of the week:*

  19. Lecture: *Democratic Backsliding*

4.5   Week 14—Protest—(April 15-April 19)

- *Perusall by end of the week:*

  – "Battle for Hong Kong (full documentary)." 2022. *Frontline.*

  – "How Nigeria Became Extremely Corrupt". 2021. *Bisi.*

  – "ENDSARS Protest In Nigeria : One Year After". 2022. *Channels Television.*

  – **Optional**. "Nigerian End SARS Protests - If You Don't Know, Now You Know". 2021. *The Daily Show.*

- *Watch on Moodle by end of the week:*

  20. Lecture: *Protest*

4.6 Week 15—Corruption, Fraud, and State Breakdown—(April 22-April 26)

- *Perusall by end of the week*

    - "Tensions high in Guinea: Opposition leader claims victory in presidential election". 2020. *DW News.*

    - "Is Myanmar a failed state?". 2021. *The Economist.*

    - Baylouny, A. M. 2020. "Authority outside the state: Non-state actors and new institutions in the middle east." In Ungoverned Spaces, Stanford University Press, p. 136–152.

- *Watch on Moodle by end of the week*

    21. Lecture: *Corruption and Electoral Fraud*

    22. Lecture: *State Breakdown and Non-state Authority*

- *Discussion on Moodle by end of the week:*

    10. State fragility

4.7 Week 16—Final deadlines—(April 29-May 3)

- *Due:*

    - **Module 4 Perusall annotations due Monday April 29 by 11:59 P.M.**

    - **Module 4 Moodle Discussions annotations due Monday April 29 by 11:59 P.M.**

    - Final project due **Tuesday, April 30 by 11:59 P.M.**

    - Final project Memo due **Wednesday, May 1 by 11:59 P.M.**